



## **KC TENANTS**

### **Tenant Bill of Rights Executive Summary**

AS OF: October 28, 2019

**KC Tenants:** KC Tenants is an organization led by a multiracial, multigenerational base in Kansas City that has sought to build power among poor and working class tenants. KC Tenants is organizing to ensure that everyone in Kansas City has a safe, healthy, accessible, and truly affordable home. After making housing a key issue in the KCMO elections this spring, KC Tenants decided to run a campaign to win a Tenant Bill of Rights, written by the people who are closest to the problems.

**Tenant Bill of Rights Package:** KC Tenants drafted a Tenant Bill of Rights package, informed by lived experience and support by legal experts, to be passed by the KCMO Mayor and City Council. Tenants make up 48% of the City's residents. The Bill of Rights package aims to address the housing issues tenants face, especially related to affordability, access, health, and accountability. The proposed package includes two resolutions and an ordinance. KC Tenants wants them passed together, and fully funded to ensure implementation and enforcement.

- 1. Tenant Bill of Rights:** This resolution affirms the Mayor and Council's commitment to enforcing existing tenant rights, and lists additional protections that will allow Kansas City's tenants more security in their housing. To ensure implementation and enforcement, the resolution directs the Council to provide \$1 million annual general fund support for a new Division of the Tenant Advocate (see below).
- 2. Right to Counsel:** This resolution establishes a right to counsel for low-income tenants, directing the City Manager to fund lawyers in landlord-tenant legal disputes, including eviction. The lawyers would provide free services to tenants with incomes at or under 200% of the federal poverty line (i.e. under ~\$24,980 for an individual, under ~\$51,500 for a family of four). The cost would amount to \$650,000 annually from the general fund.
- 3. Office of the Tenant Advocate:** This ordinance establishes a new City Office to educate tenants of their rights, investigate claims, provide case support, and enforce tenant rights. The Office will manage tenants' legal counsel, establish a Tenant Center, and operate a Tenant Phone Hotline. It would also have the ability to revoke landlord permits in the event that rights are violated. New tenant rights protected by this Office include:
  - Freedom from discrimination on the basis of: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, being a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking, source of income, conviction or arrest history, or rental history;
  - Disclosures about past issues in the unit and a utilities estimate;
  - Affirmative consent and proper notice before landlord entry;
  - Accountability and restorative justice in the event of tenant harassment;
  - No "just cuz" evictions, only "good cause" evictions;
  - Limits on security deposits, late fees, and attorneys fees; and,
  - Right to organize, collectively bargain, and protection from retaliation.

RALLY: OCTOBER 30, 2019.

PACKAGE INTRODUCTION: OCTOBER 31, HOUSING COMMITTEE HEARING: NOVEMBER 6.

CONTACT KCTENANTS@GMAIL.COM WITH QUESTIONS.